Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on The Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Practical aspects of nuclear disarmament

In pursuing nuclear disarmament, nuclear weapon States encounter various practical issues, and through greater familiarization with these practical issues, it is expected, the international community can deepen its understanding on how to proceed with nuclear disarmament.

First, the nuclear weapon States are invited to keep the international community informed of practical issues that the implementation of nuclear disarmament measures entails.

Nuclear disarmament measures are often costly, both in terms of nuclear weapons dismantlement and disposal, and in terms of ensuring the chain of custody which includes safe and secure transport and storage of fissile material as well as its control and accounting. Nuclear disarmament measures may also pose various technical challenges. For example, the management of surplus weapons plutonium may require the modification of existing technologies and perhaps also the development of new ones. Institutionally, there is need, for example, for national, regional and international coordination among national authorities to prevent the illicit trafficking of nuclear material. Furthermore, nuclear disarmament has a social dimension. It is necessary, for example, to accommodate the economic and intellectual needs of displaced scientists and engineers who had worked for nuclear weapons related industries.

Second, these nuclear weapon States are invited to explain the operational measures they have taken such as de-targeting their nuclear warheads and taking their nuclear forces off alert including the removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles. These measures may enhance confidence, especially among the nuclear weapon States, themselves.

Nuclear weapon States are invited to offer such information in various fora, including the Conference on Disarmament and this strengthened Review Process for the NPT.

Japan, for its part, intends to request the Department of Disarmament of the United Nations Secretariat to consider allocating a session of the forthcoming United Nations Disarmament Conference in Nagasaki to be held in November this year, solely for the aforementioned issues of practical aspects of nuclear disarmament.

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